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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 004116

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/ERA, EUR/WE, STAS, EAP/J, AND OES/SAT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2014

TAGS: [TRGY](#) [TSPL](#) [TNGD](#) [ENRG](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPANISH ON ITER HOME

REF: SECSTATE 223994

Classified By: ECONCOUNS WHITNEY BAIRD PER 1.4 (B/D)

1. (U) ESTHOFF made reftel points October 19-22 to: (1) Juan Antonio Rubio, Director General of the Center for Energy, Environment, and Technology Investigation (CIEMAT); (2) Francisco Javier Arana Landa, Deputy Director General for Nuclear Energy, Ministry of Industry, Tourism, and Commerce; (3) Carlos Alejaldre Losilla, Director General for Technology Policy, Ministry of Science and Education; and, (4) Julio Barcelo, Commissioner, Nuclear Security Council (CSN - Spain's Nuclear Regulatory Commission equivalent).

2. (C) Arana said he agreed on the importance of maintaining the six-party framework, arguing that it would simply be too expensive for the world to pursue two ITERs (one EU/Russia/China; the other U.S./Japan/South Korea). He thought the initial French brush-off of the Japanese "host/non-host" offer was merely a negotiating tactic designed to exact as many concessions as possible from the Japanese. He felt France would come around in the end and provide Tokyo a more constructive response.

3. (C) Barcelo also agreed with our points, but unlike Arana, was convinced that Paris was determined "for the glory of France" to pursue an EU-centric ITER without U.S. participation. Alejaldre, who will lead the Spanish team to the Vienna meeting, told ESTHOFF that the session had been postponed until November 9. He said Spain strongly supports the six-party framework and will so argue at the November 9 meeting and within subsequent EU councils. Rubio also agreed that staying with the six-party framework would be ideal. As to whether Spain would lobby France to not go alone, Rubio frankly responded, "it depends what France might offer Spain" in the context of an EU-centric project.

4. (C) COMMENT: Four senior interlocutors; four different visions. It is clear that we have a potential ally in Spain, which lost out to France in the intra-EU contest to be the ITER host. But, of course, the key question and big unknown is whether this sympathy will result in Spain arguing strenuously within EU councils to keep to the six-party framework. One of the six major planks of Spain's "new" Socialist Government is "the return to Europe." This has often resulted in a "give the French and Germans what they want" policy line. Our interlocutors, however, thought the ITER has not been overly politicized (i.e., it remains off the Socialist's radar screen). Thus, on balance, we believe Spain will at least initially take our side on this one when the EU sits down on November 25 to make its decision. However, should France be serious about the EU going alone (or without the U.S.), we should not expect Spain to fall on its sword to defend the six-party framework.

ARGYROS